

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Small Steps to a Giant Leap The Middle East in the Cold War

“... Such measures will provide the greatest insurance against Communist inroads. Words alone are not enough.”
The Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957

Standard: II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Explain the role of the Middle East in the early Cold War
- Describe actions by the United States or the Soviet Union in the Middle East
- Analyze primary documents related to foreign policy

Time: 1-2 class periods

Materials: Documents: **1955** *The Baghdad Pact*
1957 *The Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East*

Resources: *Readings on the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine*
Reading: Soviet Reaction to the Baghdad Pact

Large wall map or projected map of the Middle East

Exercises: Signs for Students (cut before class)
Stepping Stones

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The Cold War-era was a time of decision for countries around the world. Should you form a defensive alliance with your neighbors or should you “choose sides” and align with either the United States or the Soviet Union? What moves would protect your interests and government in the future?

Countries in the volatile Middle East faced especially difficult choices. The region was a muddle of World War I-era colonial decision making in the new post-World War II world.

The documents in this lesson represent the SMALL STEPS of alignment first taken by some of the countries in the region. These documents also reveal the role of the United States as it made decisions as an observer (SMALL STEPS) to a participant with the Eisenhower Doctrine (GIANT LEAP.)

- 1.** Assign the readings and documents for students to read outside of class, if possible. Explain to all students that some of them will represent the countries involved in the readings in an activity during the next class period. Selectively assign only one student the additional reading, *Soviet Reaction to the Baghdad Pact*. This student will represent the Soviet Union in the activity. The same can be done with the United States or, if the teacher prefers, have someone volunteer the day of the activity. If work cannot be completed as homework, allow one class period for reading and gathering information. Otherwise, the activity can be completed in one day.
- 2.** Prepare signs and stepping stones prior to class.
- 3.** Have stepping stones on floor. (The Baghdad Pact and CENTO should be close to each other, needing only SMALL STEPS to reach one from the other. Place the Eisenhower Doctrine stone far enough that students will have to do a GIANT LEAP to its location.
- 4.** Randomly distribute signs to students as they enter the classroom. Do assign the Soviet Union (USSR) sign to the same student who read, *Soviet Reaction to the Baghdad Pact*. Note: Not all students will receive signs. Those who do not should view the proceedings and be prepared to share in the discussion that follows.
- 5.** Use the map and have students identify the countries involved in this activity.
- 6.** Ask students who belong to the Baghdad Pact to move to that stepping stone. (Not all will fit on the stone, but it is representative of the organization.) They should do this without prompting from the teacher since the information is in readings and documents.
- 7.** Ask the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) to come forward and stand just outside the range of the stepping stone.
- 8.** Have one of the Baghdad Pact countries explain why they formed this alliance.
 - a.** Prompt these countries to explain why they are the "Northern Tier" in the Cold War.
 - b.** Have the United Kingdom explain its involvement.
 - c.** Ask the Soviet Union to explain its presence and provide its opinion of the Baghdad Pact.
 - d.** Have the United States explain why it is "hovering" on the fringe of the alliance.
- 9.** Have countries move to the stepping stone, CENTO (Central Treaty Organization). Which country does not move forward? Have that student explain the position of that country.
- 10.** Have the United States move to stand on the Eisenhower Doctrine GIANT LEAP stone. This student should explain the purpose of the

Doctrine, why this approach by the U.S. is a “giant leap,” and use a few selected quotes to illustrate its content. For example: “Words alone are not enough.”

11. Ask the student with the “Middle East” sign (representing the entire region) to join the United States on this GIANT LEAP stone. Other countries may be seated. This student should explain how the Eisenhower Doctrine provides the region with a measure of security, BUT the Middle Eastern countries are independent and may not want uninvited help. Once again, the Soviet Union may comment on this action by the United States.

12. Have students return to their desks.

13. Discuss the increased involvement by the United States in the Middle East with the Eisenhower Doctrine. How was it a GIANT LEAP” for both the United States and the countries of the Middle East? Ask the Middle Eastern countries to explain how they feel about the United States and the Soviet Union contending for power around the world? Do they find themselves “caught in the middle” of a power struggle? Or, do the countries find that asserting their independence and decision-making does not mean they are pawns in the Cold War game? What advantages might they hold in this era of two super powers?

Extension Activities:

1. Introduce or review the role of the United States in the Suez Canal Crisis.

2. Examine the role played by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the leader of Egypt, in the Middle East and Cold War interchanges. ■